

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7590

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 7560

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PINS, EC

SUBJECT: DEPORTATION OF COUP PLOTTERS

REF: QUITO 7488

1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING THE RESIGNATION OF THE FOUR "SPECIAL DEFENDERS" ON OCTOBER 7 AND HEIGHTENED CRITICISM OF THE MILITARY REGIME'S TRIAL OF THOSE ACCUSED IN THE SEPTEMBER 1 COUP ATTEMPT, THE GOE TOOK MEASURES AIMED AT REMOVING THIS OBJECT OF DISCORD WITHIN THE ECUADOREAN POLITICAL SYSTEM. ON OCTOBER 11 THE GOE SUSPENDED BY DECREE THE "CONSEJO EXTRAORDINARIO DE GUERRA" THAT HAD BEEN TRYING THE ACCUSED. TEN OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFICERS, INCLUDING TWO OF THE "SPECIAL DEFENDERS", WERE DEPORTED EARLY OCTOBER 12, AND ALL WERE GIVEN PUNISHMENTS RANGING BETWEEN EXPLUSION FROM THE ARMED FORCES WITH LOSS OF RETIREMENT BENEFITS TO A SUSPENSION FROM SERVICE FOR NINETY DAYS. UNCONFIRMED REPORTS INDICATE THAT THOSE NOT DEPORTED WERE RELEASED. THE GOE APPARENTLY MOVED TO END THE INTERMINABLE "CONSEJO" BECAUSE ITS PROCEEDINGS AND ACCOMPANYING PUBLIC CRITICISM TENDED TO WEAKEN THE GOVERNMENT. IT IS TOO SOON TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTS OF THIS MOVE ON THE GOE'S STABILITY. END SUMMARY.

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2. ON OCT. 11 THE GOVERNMENT OF GENERAL RODRIGUEZ LARA SUSPENDED THE "CONSEJO EXTRAORDINARIO DE GUERRA" THAT HAD BEEN TRYING THOSE INDIVIDUALS CHARGED WITH PARTICIPATION IN THE UNSUCCESSFUL COUP ATTEMPT OF SEPT. 1. DECREE 836, SUSPENDING THE "CONSEJO," DICTATED THE PUNISHMENT IMPOSED UPON THOSE CHARGED. THE PRINCIPALS WERE EXPELLED FROM THE ARMED FORCES AND DEPRIVED OF THEIR RETIREMENT BENEFITS. FURTHER, EIGHT OFFICERS CHARGED IN THE COUP AND TWO OF THE SPECIAL DEFENDERS WERE DEPORTED TO PANAMA OCT. 12. THOSE DEPORTED WERE: GENERALS JUAN ARAUJO AND ALEJANDRO SOLIS; COLONELS JORGE CEVALLOS AND EFENDI MALDONADO; LT. COLONELS CARLOS GUERRERO, LUIS ARAQUE, JAIME SAENZ, AND WALTER LANDAZURI; AND "SPECIAL DEFENDERS" GENERALS LATORRE AND AULESTIA. REPORTS INDICATE THAT "SPECIAL DEFENDER" GEN. ORELLANO HAS TAKEN ASYLUM WHILE "SPECIAL DEFENDER" GEN. ESPINOSA HAS FLED TO AN UNKNOWN DESTINATION.

3. ALTHOUGH IT IS DIFFICULT TO KEEP TRACK OF ALL IMPLICATED, FOUR OFFICERS, LT. COL. EFRAIN CARRILLO AND CAPTAINS MARCO HERNANDEZ, JOSE VELA AND SERGIO SALAS, WERE FOUND INNOCENT AND RELEASED BY THE "CONSEJO" ON OCT. 8, PRIOR TO ITS DISSOLUTION. OFFICERS NOT DEPORTED OR RELEASED BY THE "CONSEJO" EARLIER ARE NOT REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN RELEASED. THERE IS NO WORD ON THE FATE OF THE TWO CIVILIANS EARLIER CHARGED WITH PARTICIPATION IN THE COUP ATTEMPT, ALTHOUGH ONE REPORT STATES THAT JOSE VICENTE ORTUNO IS STILL BEING DETAINED.

4. THE GOE'S ACTION FOLLOWED SEVERE CRITICISM IN THE PRESS BY THE CIVILIAN OPPOSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE CASE AS A MEANS TO DISCREDIT THE MILITARY REGIME. THE CIVILIANS WERE GREATLY AIDED IN THEIR ATTACKS ON THE GOVERNMENT BY PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS OF THE FOUR MILITARY APPOINTED DEFENDERS WHO HAD RESIGNED.

5. THE GOVERNMENT BEGAN TO RESPOND FORCEFULLY ON OCT. 10 WHEN LIC. HUGO TREVINO TUTIVEN, THE SECRETARY OF THE OFFICE OF EX-PRESIDENT CARLOS JULIO AROSEMENA, ALONG WITH CIVILIAN DEFENDER FERNANDO ACOSTA YEPEZ, WAS JAILED. THERE HAVE BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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NO REPORTS CONCERNING THEIR RELEASE.

6. IN A SPEECH ON THE MORNING OF OCT. 11, PRESIDENT GUILLERMO RODRIGUEZ LARA SAID THAT THE GOE COULD NO LONGER MAINTAIN ITS TOLERANT ATTITUDE IN THE FACE OF CONTINUED REBELLION BY THOSE BEHIND THE SEPT. 1 COUP ATTEMPT. HE SIGNLED OUT THE FORMER GOVERNMENT MINISTERS WHO SERVED AS "SPECIAL DEFENDERS" FOR SPECIAL CRITICISM, AND ALSO

TOOK AIM AT THE PRESS.

7. THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT ISSUED A PRESS RELEASE OCT. 13 SAYING THAT THERE WERE NO ARREST ORDERS FOR "SPECIAL DEFENDERS" ORELLANO AND ESPINOSA. GENERALS LATORRE AND AULESTIA WERE INCLUDED AMONG THE DEPORTED BECAUSE THEY USED THEIR ROLE IN THE "CONSEJO" TO CONTINUE THEIR CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

8. COMMENT: IN THE FACE OF THE INABILITY OF THE "CONSEJO" TO SUCCESSFULLY TRY THOSE ACCUSED OF PARTICIPATING IN THE COUP ATTEMPT, IT APPEARS THAT GENERAL RODRIGUEZ DECIDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT COULD NO LONGER BE SUBJECTED TO THE DAILY ABUSE THAT ACCOMPANIED THE "CONSEJO'S" PROCEEDINGS. THE GOE INITIALLY TRIED A LEGAL DEVICE TO BRING AN END TO THE EPISODE AND WHEN THAT FAILED, IT ISSUED ITS DECREE. TO TAKE THE STRONG CRITICISM INDEFINITELY THAT FOLLOWED THE "CONSEJO" WOULD LIKELY HAVE WEAKENED THE RODRIGUEZ GOVERNMENT FURTHER, SOMETHING THAT RODRIGUEZ OBVIOUSLY COULD NOT ACCEPT. HOWEVER, IT IS TOO SOON TO DETERMINE WHAT EFFECT THIS LATEST MOVE WILL HAVE ON THE STRENGTH AND STABILITY OF THE RODRIGUEZ GOVERNMENT. WHAT IS CLEAR HOWEVER, IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO TAKE A MORE FORCEFUL STANCE TOWARD ITS CRITICS.
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